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## The Formation of Circus Culture in Lviv (Lemberg) (The Late 18<sup>th</sup>–Mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century)

### 1. Introduction

Due to the significant place of the Circus Art in the modern Ukrainian culture, in recent years there has been an increasing interest in the history of the Circus and the theatrical acrobatic performances on the ethnic territories of Ukraine. In the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the first professional troupes: Equestrians, Acrobats, Athletes, and Magicians started performing at the ethnic territories of Ukraine. Today we call them “Circus Artists”, and the variety of skills and genres in which they have performed are united under the concept of “Circus Arts”; during that time, the Ukrainian lands were divided between the Russian and the Habsburg Empires. The Circus, and other spectacles of artistic performances that took place in the Ukrainian cities of the Russian Empire have become a subject for analysis by the number of Soviet and modern Ukrainian scientists. Which in turn, sparked a particular interest in exploring the development of the Circus in the Western Ukrainian lands in the late 18<sup>th</sup>–early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. During this time that they were a part of the Habsburg Empire, the artistic performances were never fully described, researched or analyzed. The only article dedicated to Acrobats, Magicians, and Panoramas in Lviv in the years 1800–1850 was written

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by the Polish author Barbara Lasocka, and published in the Polish theatrical magazine in 1969<sup>2</sup>.

In this offered article, comparing to the attempts of the predecessors, the database of sources used for the analysis and research, has been expanded. The materials of the press and circus publicity posters of the studied period from the digital funds of the libraries and museums of Austria, Poland, Germany, and the USA have been used.

**The purpose** of the article is to detect the features of the development of Circus Art and to determine the place of Circus performances in the cultural space of Lviv in the late 18<sup>th</sup>–mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Methods.** The historical, biographical and comparative methods have been applied to maximize the description of the functioning of the Circus in Lviv in the late 18<sup>th</sup>–mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and to achieve the objectives, having been set.

**The Scientific Novelty.** The author for the first time ever opens the unknown pages of the history of the Circus and Acrobatic performances in main cultural center of the Western Ukrainian lands at the time that they were a part of the Hapsburg Empire – the city of Lviv. As part of the study, the author has discovered, systematized, translated and used the materials from the German and Polish press of the late 18<sup>th</sup> – mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, as well as circus posters from the libraries of Poland (Jagiellonian University in Kraków), Austria (Austrian National Library) and a number of US university libraries, which are being deployed into scientific circulation for the first time.

## 2. The main text

The modern definition of “Circus Art” unites the long list of spectacular performances and original acts, however in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century such a concept was not applicable towards what we call “Circus Art” today. The different kinds of acrobatic performances, wild animals’ training, magic performances existed by themselves or grouped around the productions shown by the Equestrian troupes, which have been the

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<sup>2</sup> Lasocka, Barbara: O czarodziejach, akrobatach, panoramach. Lwów 1800–1850 (1969). Pamiętnik Teatralny: czasopismo kwartalne poświęcone historii i krytyce teatru, Tom 18, Numer 1/2 (69/70). pp. 127–149

main part of Circus performances of that time. The word "Circus" was associated with the structures of the Ancient Rome, or the modern buildings for the Artistic Equestrians' performances. Also, in the scientific discourse of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the acrobatic performances could not be classified as the esthetical category of "Fine Arts".

The first documentation of any acrobatic performance in Lviv took place between 1770–1780. According to the posters in Lviv; the tricks on the slack wire, and horizontal rope, presented during the acrobatic-magical performance was never seen in the city before this time. This program also included the Pantomime, "The Wily Arlequin", and a mechanical firework, and fire show<sup>3</sup>.

As early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century, traveling comedians began appearing in the territory of the Habsburg Empire, to entertain not only the aristocrats but also the general population<sup>4</sup>.

The Circus as we know it today dates back to about 1770, when Philip Astley set up a small arena in London. Astley presented a variety of acts including: Horseback riders, Tightrope walkers, Jumpers, Acrobats, Jugglers, and Clowns. Over the next 50 years other people imitated Astley's example, and circuses sprang up, all over Europe<sup>5</sup>.

The professional circus in Austria, is associated with the name of the Equestrian, Christoph de Bach, who founded the first permanent "Circus Gymnasticus" in Vienna in 1808<sup>6</sup>. This building was used for circus performances until 1852.

In the press of the late 1810's, there was an information about the functioning of the Ranz Riding School (Ranzischen Reitschule) in Lviv, which was located in the Jesuit Garden (now the Ivan Franko Park). This

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<sup>3</sup> „Rozmaitości" (Iwowskie). (1840). Nr 11. 14.03. Dawne afisze Iwowskie, p. 99.

<sup>4</sup> The situation of the circus in the EU Member States (Working Paper) European Parliament Education and Culture Series. (2003), 181 p. / URL: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2003/326724/DG-4-CULT\\_ET\(2003\)326724\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2003/326724/DG-4-CULT_ET(2003)326724_EN.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> The situation of the circus in the EU Member States (Working Paper) European Parliament Education and Culture Series. (2003). 181 p. / URL: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2003/326724/DG-4-CULT\\_ET\(2003\)326724\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2003/326724/DG-4-CULT_ET(2003)326724_EN.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> „Intelligenzblatt der Jenischen Allem. Literatur-Zeitung" (1808), Nr 82. 12.11, pp. 677–678.

venue was built in the early nineteenth century by Józef Krupp, a “titled professor” of horseback riding, and in 1810 it was acquired by Walenty Ranc. This Riding School was long and relatively low; in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it became a place for the performances of the Circus troupes which toured the city<sup>7</sup>.

Since the early 1820<sup>s</sup> the circus companies, theatrical acrobatic troupes, and Magicians, started visiting Lviv on a regular basis.

The rules and regulations for the artists have been written in the «Provincial Laws of the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria» (1827). The entertainers had to possess a valid passport, to obtain the special permission to perform in Lviv from the police department; and were subject to tax<sup>8</sup>.

The circus troupes were featured by the dynasties of the Equestrians; in which the skills were passed from parents to children; and kids performed at the arenas together with adults. In Lviv these troupes performed either in the popular Riding School, or at the venues specifically built at the Jesuit Garden.

In 1823 Jacques Tourniaire’s Circus, performed in Lviv at the time of the official visit to the city, of the Austrian Prince, Franz Carl Habsburg, and he attended the Circus performances at least for two times<sup>9</sup>.

It was followed by the tours of: Joseph Gautier’s “Circus Gymnasticus” (1825)<sup>10</sup>, Ludwig Kenebel’s small troupe (1825–1826)<sup>11</sup>, Peter Stephany’s “Cirque Olimpique” (1826). Stephany presented for the first time in Lviv, the historical Pantomimes. Due to the lack of space in the Circus building the Pantomimes “The Battle of Culm” and “The Mount Vesuvius” were shown ‘open air’<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Schnür-Pełowski, Stanisław – *Obrazy z przeszłości Galicyi i Krakowa (1772–1858)*. – I. lwow i lwowiane. (1896). Lwów: Gubrynowicza i Schmidta, 400, p. 98.

<sup>8</sup> Gubernial – Dekret vom 5. Mai 1827 Gub. Zahl 22062 / Prowincjonalny Zbiór Praw Królestwa Galicyi i Lodomeryi za rok 1827. Wydany za najwyższym Rozkazom pod dozorem c. k. Galicyjskiego krajowego Gubernium. – We Lwowie: Drukiem Piotra Pillera, p. 507.

<sup>9</sup> „Lemberger Zeitung” (1823), Nr 85. 18.07, p. 389.

<sup>10</sup> „Lemberger Zeitung” (1825), Nr 94. 22.08, p. 483.

<sup>11</sup> „Lemberger Zeitung” (1825), Nr 149. 30.12, p. 774.

<sup>12</sup> „Lemberger Zeitung” (1826), Nr 55. 17.05, p. 280.

In 1826 the famous Bartolomeo Bosco (Magician); recognized in the European capitals; showed his mechanical-physical performances at the Redoutensaal in Lviv<sup>13</sup>.

Also, from the mid-1820<sup>s</sup> the Menageries have regularly visited Lviv. Van Dinter (1827)<sup>14</sup>, Gulley and Schmidt (1830)<sup>15</sup>, Rossi (1834)<sup>16</sup>, Polito (1836)<sup>17</sup>; presented wild, rare, and exotic animals, as well as trained animals were shown to the public.

In 1829, the director of the Lviv Real School and local historian Alois Ule wrote (Uhle, Aloys, 1829, s. 719–720) that in the late 1820s the Lviv government discussed plans to build a permanent venue for acrobatic performances and menageries on the site of the former “lower castle” (niedere Schloß), as the new Circus was necessary in the city due to frequent tours, and the building of the Riding School, where such performances usually took place, was too small and it was located in an inconvenient place. By order of the Gubernialrath, the area was cleared, and a garden was planned to be built around the future Circus. However, as the city community needed funds to build the Town Hall, the commissioned area was sold in parts for private development, and the Circus construction plan has never been implemented<sup>18</sup>.

In the mid-1830<sup>s</sup> the acrobatic troupes of Fourreau and Dallot; as well as, athletic troupes of, Dupuis, and Rappo performed at the theatres of Lviv<sup>19</sup>.

Henrik Dallo, “the first tightrope walker of the Madame Sacchi Theater in Paris” gathered full houses and made a sensation in Lviv with his masterful performances on the rope<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> „Lemberger Zeitung” (1826), Nr 40. 10.04, p. 195.

<sup>14</sup> „Lemberger Zeitung” (1827), Nr 30. 14.03, pp. 145–146.

<sup>15</sup> „Lemberger Zeitung” (1830), Nr 28. 10.03, p. 134.

<sup>16</sup> „Lemberger Zeitung” (1834), Nr 5. 15.01, p. 19.

<sup>17</sup> „Lemberger Zeitung” (1836), Nr 64. 06.06, p. 296.

<sup>18</sup> Neues Archiv für Geschichte, Staatenkunde, Literatur und Kunst (1829), Nr 91. 13.11. Die Verschönerungen Lembergs, der Hauptstadt des österreichischen Galiziens, von 1820 bis 1829. – Von Aloys Uhle, Director der k. k. Realschule zu Lemberg, pp. 716–720.

<sup>19</sup> „Mnemosyne” (1840), Nr 33. 25.04, p. 140.

<sup>20</sup> „Der Wanderer” (1836), Nr 8. 08.01, p. 4.

In 1834 Heinrich Wolff's «Cirque Olympique» from Berlin was destroyed due to rough weather conditions in Lviv<sup>21</sup>. The Heinrich Schreyer's «Monkey Theater» successfully performed in Lviv soon after<sup>22</sup>.

In 1836, followed by Christoph de Bach's death in 1834, his widow Laura de Bach, and her partner Louis Soullier, performed in Lviv with their troupe on the way to Constantinople. The new Circus-Amphitheatre was specially built in Lviv for Soullier-de Bach's troupe<sup>23</sup>. Besides the Equestrian performances, the company presented the Great Amphitheatrical Chariot Races, which were supposed to continue the traditions of the First Olympic Games (776 BC), and the Ancient Roman tournaments<sup>24</sup>.

In 1838 the famous athlete and acrobat Carl Rappo, recognized in Europe as "the first Hercules and athlete of his time" visited Lviv and performed on the stage of the city Theater and also at the Arena, located in the Jesuit Garden. Rappo's 10-years old son, as well as the Chinese acrobat from London, Samuel Motty and the rope-balancer Carl Nerwo from Madrid with members of his family, had also been a part of this recognized artistic cast<sup>25</sup>. One of Rappo's remembered performances was one that had taken place in September, where he commemorated the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Leipzig, also known as the Battle of the Nations<sup>26</sup>.

In 1839 the Equestrian troupe of Emmanuel Beranek from Prague, visited Lviv for the first time. His Troupe had already performed in many cities of the Austrian Monarchy, and various German cities in the previous years. It consisted of 40 performers, and 30 trained horses. The German newspapers, described the performances in Lviv as very successful; and the public recognized and admired the skills and agility of the Equestrian troupe performing on the manege. The performance was

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<sup>21</sup> „Theaterzeitung und Originalblatt für Kunst, Literatur, Musik, Mode und geselliges Leben” (1834), Nr 99. 20.05, p. 398.

<sup>22</sup> „Lemberger Zeitung” (1834), Nr 104. 12.09, p. 544.

<sup>23</sup> „Der Wanderer” (1836), Nr 228. 15.08, p. 4.

<sup>24</sup> „Lemberger Zeitung” (1836), Nr 104. 12.09, p. 480.

<sup>25</sup> „Rozmaitości” (Iwowskie) (1838), Nr 17. 28.04, p. 136.

<sup>26</sup> „Der Wanderer” (1838), Nr 227. 22.09, p. 908.

attended by Archduke Ferdinand, the Duke of Modena, a representative of the Austrian Royal family, that revealed the perfection of the artists' work<sup>27</sup>. At the same time, the Polish press disregarded the performances of Beranek's Circus, and described the shows as average<sup>28</sup>.

In Spring and Summer season of 1841 the Circus of Elizabeth Tourniaire performed in Lviv. The Polish press gave enthusiastic reviews over the performances<sup>29</sup>, while opposingly the German press had a very critical view. It compared the spectacles of Tourniaire's troupe, with the guest performances of Laura de Bach and Louis Soullier's Circus in Lviv in 1836, pointing that Tourniare didn't have as bright and charismatic of individualities among the performers; they weren't as eager to attract and keep public attention<sup>30</sup>.

Later, in September 1841 the acrobatic troupe of Michael Averino performed at the Theater, as well as at the Circus Arena. The achievements of Averino's troupe have been recognized with the slogan «non plus ultra» (*from lat.* "no further beyond"). Averino showed amazing skills and balance on the vertical rope; his son Eugenio was unsurpassed on two parallel ropes and in "a la Klischnigg" act. The troupe had been featured by the performances of Carlo Depasquali, Amadeo Gardosi, Ferdinando Wetz, Emilio Merabeni, the wife of Mr. Averino, and his daughter Lactita Averino<sup>31</sup>.

A local observer, Max Reinau; had been inviting everyone to go and see Averino's performances, as he found it «impossible to describe the indescribable»<sup>32</sup>.

In 1942 Alessandro Guerra's "Cirque Olimpique" visited Lviv. Guerra presented historical pantomimes at the arena and at the stage of the newly built and recently opened Theater of Count Skarbek. The eques-

<sup>27</sup> „Mnemosyne” (1839), Nr 74. 21.09, p. 296.

<sup>28</sup> „Gazeta Lwowska” (1839), Nr 121. 15.10, p. 749.

<sup>29</sup> „Gazeta Lwowska” (1841), Nr 46. 20.04, p. 279.

<sup>30</sup> „Leseblätter für Stadt und Land zur Beförderung der Kultur in Kunst, Wissenschaft und Leben” (1841), Nr 59. 25.05, pp. 471–472.

<sup>31</sup> „Leseblätter für Stadt und Land zur Beförderung der Kultur in Kunst, Wissenschaft und Leben” (1841), Nr 101. 04.09, p. 808.

<sup>32</sup> „Leseblätter für Stadt und Land zur Beförderung der Kultur in Kunst, Wissenschaft und Leben” (1841), Nr 106. 16.09, pp. 847–848.

trian battle scenes, impressed the audience in the pantomime "The Adventures of Henry IV", while the open air performances in the Jesuit Garden had double the effect, due to the vast space<sup>33</sup>.

In summer 1844 Jean Dupuis performed in the old Theater with his troupe<sup>34</sup>. Besides the usual acrobatic and athletic performances, the artists John and Begel performed an original act, in which the artists imitated marble statues<sup>35</sup>. Moreover, the so-called "Italian shadows" were shown in Lviv for the first time<sup>36</sup>.

In 1847 the magician Bartolomeo Bosco visited Lviv for the second time after 21 years of absence. Bosco became the talk of the town at that time, performing just 3 shows, and completely filling the house; even in spite of the fact, that the tickets were very expensive<sup>37</sup>.

In 1847 Beranek's Circus visited Lviv for the second time since 1839<sup>38</sup>. The historical pantomime "Mazeppa" was shown in Lviv for the first time ever by Beranek's troupe. The performances of the young Jan Gärtner, and females Anna Hodasz and alongside the very young Olympia Percival; were recognized by the critics as the highlights of the Circus productions; being called the best members of the artistic cast<sup>39</sup>.

In 1848 Beranek's troupe visited Lviv again. The Circus building was constructed near the Skarbek's Theater in the city center. During this time Beranek also arranged the Equestrian races<sup>40</sup>.

The scientific and technological progress of the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century also influenced the technical development of constructing of Circus buildings; and the improvement its' interior. The new acts and genres have been created; and the skills of the performers' raised on a higher level.

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<sup>33</sup> „Gazeta Lwowska” (1842), Nr 62. 28.05, s. 405.

<sup>34</sup> „Lemberger Zeitung” (1844), Nr 100. 30.08, s. 524.

<sup>35</sup> „Gazeta Lwowska” (1844), Nr 107. 10.09, s. 703.

<sup>36</sup> „Gazeta Lwowska” (1844), Nr 113. 24.09, s. 741.

<sup>37</sup> „Der Humorist” (1847), Nr 63. 15.03, s. 250.

<sup>38</sup> „Gazeta Lwowska” (1847), Nr 130. 06.11, pp. 849–850.

<sup>39</sup> „Gazeta Lwowska” (1847), Nr 138. 25.11, pp. 910–911.

<sup>40</sup> „Bohemia” (1848), Nr. 30. 22.02. p. 4.

Besides the Equestrian troupes, the acrobatic teams have performed at the stage of the Count Scarbek's Theater. In 1852 Samuel Motti and Rudolf Wolgard presented the show of strength demonstration and organized the wrestling competition. They combined both the Artistic presentation and the Sports contest to attract the wider audience<sup>41</sup>.

In 1853 the Circus Beranek arrived to Lviv for the fourth time since 1839. It's performances had a tremendous success. At that time it was the best troupe of the Habsburg Empire. It consisted of 65 artists and 50 horses. The Equestrian Maneuvers, Parisian Quadrilles, French Counterdances have been a part of the performances at the specially built Circus near the old City Theater<sup>42</sup>.

Beranek's success caused troubles to the Polish Theater productions in Lviv, as the audience ignored the Theater. The Lvivians preferred attending Circus performances. Also, Beranek arranged the Chariot Races at Jablonowsky Garden, in which the spectators could bet for the victory of the participants<sup>43</sup>.

The year 1857 in the history of Lviv has become a year rich with theatrical guest acrobatic performances and the Circus guest tours. In February the acrobats Boorns i Chapman performed at the City Theater<sup>44</sup>. In August the famous mimic acrobat Eduard Klischnigg gave several successful performances at the Scarbek's Theater. He played the character of the Ape; and he was incomparable in it, according to the critics' reviews and the local press<sup>45</sup>.

Another significant event of the year in Lviv was the guest tour of the Circus Renz, which has been recognized as the best troupe in Germany. The big luxury Circus was built at the Jesuit Garden. The cast contained 110 artists and 75 horses<sup>46</sup>. The critics highly appreciated the performances. The press described the beauty of the horses and the highest

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<sup>41</sup> „Gazeta Lwowska” (1852), Nr 129. 07.06. p. 516.

<sup>42</sup> „Gazeta Lwowska” (1853), Nr 197. 30.08. p. 788.

<sup>43</sup> Dziennik Urzędowy do „Gazety Lwowskiej” (1853), Nr 204. 07.09, p. 1571.

<sup>44</sup> „Swit”. Dziennik poświęcony polityce, przemysłowi i literaturze. (1857), Nr 35. 13.02, p. 4.

<sup>45</sup> „Lemberger allgemeiner Anzeiger” (1857), Nr 67. 30.07. p. 1.

<sup>46</sup> „Wiener Courier” (1857), Nr 192. 01.08, p. 2.

level of the Equestrians' skills. Lviv has never seen the troupe like that before. Also, the beautiful and exquisite costumes illustrated the times of the Middle Ages and the times of the French Musketeers<sup>47</sup>. The young Frenchman Baptiste Loisset has been mentioned by the critics as an example of courage and dexterity: he did front and back «salto mortale» having been standing on the horse's back<sup>48</sup>.

Ernst Renz gathered a strong team from the former members from the old famous troupes of Tourniaire, Soullier and Guerra and the artists from his own troupe<sup>49</sup>. The performances have been awarded with the applause of the audience and the reviews in the local press.

In November 1857 the Circus Slezak performed at the Circus building left after Renz<sup>50</sup>. He presented the Pantomimes – “Robert the Devil” and “The Prince of Normandy, or Bertram's visit to Hell”. Once again, the local theatrical productions have experienced the inevitable rivalry with Circus productions. It caused sensitive losses to the Theater, as the audience preferred attending Circus performances to the Theater productions<sup>51</sup>.

In 1858 Circus Slezak returned to Lviv. Besides the performances at the Circus, it has also presented few shows at the productions of the German Theater – “Die Brigittenau” and “The Thieves in Abruzzi”<sup>52</sup>.

In April–May 1859 the Circus Hinne performed in Lviv. One of the Polish newswriters strictly criticized Hinne's productions, as the Circus attracted the audience, which, according to the critics, should have attended the Polish Theatre<sup>53</sup>. This tension once again showed the perception of the Circus by Polish intellectual society as the threat for the Theater, which played an educational role for the Poles and had a major cultural influence in Galicia.

In August – September 1859 Circus Carre presented the latest achievements in the Equestrian Art; the French Ballets; the Maneuvers;

<sup>47</sup> „Dziennik Literacki” (1857), Nr 101. 29.08, p. 933.

<sup>48</sup> „Przyjacieli Domowi” (1857), Nr 36. 22.08. Cyrk Renza we Lwowie, p. 320.

<sup>49</sup> „Dziennik Literacki” (1857), Nr 98. 22.08, p. 909.

<sup>50</sup> „Gazeta Lwowska” (1857), Nr 256. 09.11, p. 1024.

<sup>51</sup> „Oesterreichisches Morgenblatt für Kunst, Wissenschaft, Literatur und geselliges Leben” (1858), Nr 51. 27.05. Der Circus Slezak, p. 2.

<sup>52</sup> „Gazeta Lwowska” (1858), Nr 136. 17.06, p. 544.

<sup>53</sup> „Gwiazdka Cieszyńska” (1859), Nr 26. 25.06. pp. 205–206.

the English Races, the Pantomimes, the Gymnastic and Acrobatic productions. The artists have performed wearing the beautiful costumes. The music accompaniment was performed by the Capella of live musicians<sup>54</sup>. The Aerial Trapeze performance was presented in Lviv for the first time ever by the clowns and gymnasts from the Imperial Circus (Circus Napoleon) in Paris Rocrée Wahilie i Jeunet<sup>55</sup>.

In the decade of the 1850's the Circus performances have been very popular among the Lvivians, as well as the Acrobatic productions, having been shown at the local theaters' stages. However, the competition between the Circus and the Theater caused the negative reaction of the Polish "intellectual elites", which thought the true patriotic Poles should have attended the Polish dramatic productions and not the Equestrian performances.

Among the main features of the performances of the 1820<sup>s</sup>-1830<sup>s</sup> it can be mentioned: a) the novelty effect of the professional circus troupes' touring activity in the European cities, and the public admiration; b) the attention of the special and public press to those performances; c) the construction of the special circus buildings and its technical development; d) the multiculturalism: the troupes had international cast, the artists spoke different languages, and their spectacular performances were easily understandable by the audience of any nation of the multinational Habsburg Empire; e) the competition between different circus, and acrobatic companies, between Circus and Theatre; f) the spread of Circus Arts at circus arenas, and at theatrical stages; g) uncertainty and contradiction of status of the Circus.

Despite the fact that according to the definitions of the encyclopedias of the studied period; the skills of the artists could be considered as "the fine arts of space and time", the intellectual elites were careful about the certain esthetic determination of the Circus and its performers. At the same time, the Circus had a high social status. The performances have been visited by the noblemen, and members of the Royal family.

In the late 1830's-1840's the Lviv public, and critics have since become more informed, leading to be more demanding over the aspect

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<sup>54</sup> Dziennik urzędowy do „Gazety Lwowskiej” (1859), Nr 189. 20.08, p. 990.

<sup>55</sup> „Gazeta Lwowska” (1859), Nr 217. 23.09, p. 869.

of 'Circus' at the described period. The euphoria from the first guest performances of the previous years have passed; the detailed reviews have been printed in newspapers, and special artistic editions. Every new troupe since, has been compared to the predecessors; leading to critical comments for shows of the new era.

Lviv in the 1850's experienced the acquaintance with the latest achievements of the Equestrians' Art during the guest tours of some major Circus troupes from Western Europe. At least two of them (Circus Beranek, 1853 and Circus Renz, 1857) were put by the critics on the same rank with the famous Circus Franconi in Paris, considered to be the best Circus Company in the World at that times.

The performances have become more diverse, the artists have competed in flexibility, and strength; trying to perform more spectacular equestrian tricks, and surpass the achievements of each other.

The competitive contention between the Circus and the Theatre, which was particularly sensitive towards the Polish society, as the Polish Theatre played an important educational role for the Poles in Galicia. During this time, Poland had not had statehood, having been divided between the Habsburg Empire, the Russian Empire, and Prussia.

Also, the Artistic Horse Riding (*die Kunstreiterei*), which has been the main part of the Circus productions has been associated with the influence of German culture and therefore has been perceived as alien among the "progressive" Galician Poles.

Lviv was geographically located on the crossroads from Europe to Constantinople, and the cities of the Russian Empire; therefore, the Circus troupes had been able to visit the cities so often.

### 3. Conclusions

Some of the most famous Circus companies performed in Lviv in the described period. The citizens of Lviv had the opportunity to get acquainted with the advanced achievements of the "Circus Art" of that time.

The development of Circus Arts throughout the several decades of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century included the improvement of artistic skills, the invention and appearance of new genres, acts.

The description of Circus performances in the local press has also been constantly developing.

The enrichment of Circus Art in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century had been happening by gathering different visual entertainment genres around "Artistic Horse Riding", as the basis of circus performances at that time. The formation of Circus culture of Lviv included the integration of Acrobatic and Equestrian guest performances into cultural space as an integral part of the region's cultural life and entertainment industry and the gradual awareness in the society and among the scientists that the Circus was not only an arena for performances, but a particular kind of Art or Spectacle, in which acrobatic, magical, gymnastic genres were synthesized.

Circus culture was formed as a communication platform between the Circus performers and the Circus audience.

Resembling to the balancing skills of the Ropewalkers, the Circus of the studied period had been balancing between Art, Entertainment, and Spectacle, at the same time it had been playing an important role in the cultural, and the political life of Lviv, the capital of Galicia and Lodomeria and the whole Habsburg Empire.

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## Summary

In the article, the process of the formation of Circus culture in the Western Ukrainian lands in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, during the

time that they were a part of the Habsburg Empire, is researched. Based on the materials of the periodical press of the studied period, it describes the Circus troupes, Acrobats and the Magicians, which visited Lviv, and their artistic cast and repertoire. The performances in the city from the leading European troupes, and artists have been described in chronological order.

The processes of the evolution and the diversification of the circus genres and performances have been tracked, and the features of the development of Circus Art described throughout this period have been determined.

An attempt was made to analyze the perception of circus performances in the society, and to determine the status and place of the Circus in the cultural space of that time.

**Keywords:** circus, circus art, circus riders, equestrian circus, circus acrobats, athletes, Galicia, Lviv